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BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES

Ex parte WANG LING

Appeal 2007-3333
Application 09/841,665
Technology Center 2600

Decided: March 11, 2008

Before ROBERT E. NAPPI, JOHN A. JEFFERY, and MARC S. HOFF,
Administrative Patent Judges.

NAPPI, *Administrative Patent Judge.*

DECISION ON APPEAL

This is a decision on appeal under 35 U.S.C. § 6(b) of the final rejection of claims 1, 2, and 4 through 21.

We reverse the Examiner's rejections of these claims.

INVENTION

The invention is directed to a lighting control system which includes a master remote control unit and a plurality of slave units that control the lights. The invention is directed to the steps of associating the individual

slave units with the controls on the master control unit. See pages 2 and 3 of Appellant's Specification. Claim 1 is representative of the invention and reproduced below:

1. A method of controlling plural lighting devices with a single remote control comprising the steps of:
 - associating, one by one, each of the plural lighting devices with the remote control;
 - associating, one by one, each of the plural lighting devices associated with the remote control with at least one of a particular function and a particular key on the remote control; and
 - accepting a user confirmation acknowledging the association of each of the plural lighting devices in response to a visual confirmation performed by each of the plural lighting devices upon selection of each of the plural lighting devices on the remote control.

REFERENCES

Meier	US 5,295,154	Mar. 15, 1994
Mitchell	US 5,847,955	Dec. 8, 1998
Huang	US 5,962,992	Oct. 5, 1999
Colton	US 5,986,574	Nov. 16, 1999
Sinha	US 6,188,181 B1	Feb. 13, 2001
Grouev	US 6,333,605 B1	Dec. 25, 2001
Kronz	US 6,675,196 B1	Jan. 6, 2004

REJECTIONS AT ISSUE

Claims 1, 2, 4 through 7, 10, and 19 through 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Huang in view of Sinha. The Examiner's rejection is on pages 3 through 7 of the Answer.

Claims 8, 9, and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Huang in view of Sinha and Mitchell. The Examiner's rejection is on pages 7 through 9 of the Answer.

Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Huang in view of Sinha, Mitchell and Grouev. The Examiner's rejection is on page 9 of the Answer.

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Huang in view of Sinha, and Appellant's admitted prior art. The Examiner's rejection is on pages 9 and 10 of the Answer.

Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Huang in view of Sinha, Appellant's admitted prior art and Colton. The Examiner's rejection is on pages 10 and 11 of the Answer.

Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Huang in view of Sinha, Appellant's admitted prior art Colton, and Kronz. The Examiner's rejection is on page 12 of the Answer.

Claims 15 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Huang in view of Sinha and Meier. The Examiner's rejection is on pages 12 and 13 of the Answer.

Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Huang in view of Sinha, Mitchell, and Meier. The Examiner's rejection is on page 13 of the Answer.

Throughout the opinion, we make reference to the Brief (received October 28, 2005), Reply Brief (received March 14, 2006), and the Answer (mailed January 10, 2006) for the respective details thereof.

ISSUES

Independent claims 1, 5, 10, and 21.

Appellant contends, on pages 9 through 12 of the Brief, that the Examiner's rejection of claims 1, 2, 4 through 7, 10, and 19 through 21

under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is in error. Appellant argues that the Examiner's rejection of independent claim 1 is in error as the combination of Huang and Sinha does teach or make obvious accepting a user confirmation that acknowledges an association of each lighting device with a remote panel, where the lighting device provides a visual confirmation in response to a selection of the lighting device at the remote panel. Brief 9. On pages 11 and 12 of the Brief, Appellant asserts that the Examiner's rejection of independent claims 5, 10 and 21 is in error for the same reasons.

Thus, Appellant's contentions, with respect to independent claims 1, 5, 10 and 21 present us with the issue of whether the combination of Huang and Sinha teaches a lighting control system where there is a panel remote from the lighting device, where the remote panel accepts an acknowledgment from a user that the lighting device is associated with the remote control based upon visual confirmation performed by the lighting device upon selection by a remote control.

Independent claim 8.

Appellant contends, on pages 13 and 14 of the Brief, that the Examiner's rejection of claims 8, 9, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is in error. Appellant argues that the Examiner's rejection of independent claim 8 is in error as the combination of Huang and Sinha does teach or make obvious accepting a user confirmation that acknowledges an association of each lighting device with a remote panel, where the lighting device provides a visual confirmation in response to a selection of the lighting device at the remote panel. App. Br. 13.

Thus, Appellant's contentions, with respect to independent claim 8 presents us with the same issue discussed above with respect to claim 1.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Huang teaches a lighting control system where there are master and zone controllers which control the actions of slave units that control electrical appliances or lights. Abstract.
2. Huang teaches that the slave units can be installed either through a zone controller or a master controller (both are remote from the slave units). Col. 27, ll. 46-48.
3. A slave unit is installed by depressing a button on the slave unit and depressing a button on either the master controller or the zone controller. When the button on the slave unit is depressed an LED on the slave unit is illuminated. Similarly the button on the master or zone controller illuminates a LED on the master or zone controller. Huang, col. 22, ll. 59-65, and col. 27, ll. 51-67.
4. The master or zone controller transmits an installation code to the slave unit which acknowledges receipt of this code by sending an acknowledgement signal back to the master or zone controller. The master or zone controller then transmits an acknowledgement of the acknowledgement signal and an installation LED on the master controller is turned off. Huang, col. 28, ll. 5-31.
5. Sinha teaches a lighting control system where there is a lighting control unit connected to several low voltage units that control individual lights. Abstract.

6. The lighting control unit panel includes several buttons and LEDs indicating the status of the individual low voltage units and their program settings. See Sinha, Figure 1E and col. 7, ll. 46-60.

ANALYSIS

Independent claims 1, 5, 10, and 21, and the claims dependent thereupon.

Appellant's arguments have persuaded us of error in the Examiner's rejection of independent claims 1, 5, 10 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Independent claim 1 recites "accepting a user confirmation acknowledging the association of each of the plural lighting devices in response to a visual confirmation performed by each of the plural lighting devices upon selection of each of the plural lighting devices on the remote control." Thus, the scope of claim 1 includes that there is a visual confirmation performed by the lighting devices in response to a selection on the remote control. Further, the scope of claim 1 includes that there is a step of acceptance of a user confirmation in response to the visual confirmation. Independent claims 5, 10, and 21 are each of different scope, but each contain a limitation directed to a visual confirmation by the lighting device and a step of associating or confirming the association, in response to the visual confirmation.

The Examiner states, on page 14 of the Answer:

The reference of Huang et al. is not relied upon for teaching accepting a user confirmation that acknowledges an association involving a lighting device in response to visual confirmation. The reference of Sinha et al. is relied upon for teaching accepting an user confirmation that acknowledges an association involving each lighting device in response to visual confirmation by using the Illuminated LED to confirm the selection of a particular light source (col. 7 lines 46- 56). Sinha et al. teaches LEDs 40, 41, 42, 43, and 44 are used to select a

particular LVM module (col. 7 lines 38-45) which is equivalent to Huang's slave units. The lighting devices are connected to the LVM modules (figure 1C) and the lighting device is selected by selecting the associated LVM module to which the lighting device is attached (col. 8 lines 1-4). Sinha therefore teaches the visual confirmation provided by the LED upon selection of the lighting device. The use of LEDs as evidenced by Huang and Sinha provides visual confirmation of the selected lighting device by the remote control.

While, we concur with some of the Examiner's findings, we disagree with the Examiner's finding that Sinha teaches the visual confirmation provided by the LED upon selection of the lighting device, and thus the conclusion that Sinha teaches the claimed confirmation or association step. Huang teaches a lighting control system, where there is a remote panel (master controller) and lighting devices (slave units). Fact 1. Huang teaches that the slave units can be associated with the system by either initiating the install at the slave unit or at the master controller. Fact 2. This installation involves acknowledgments by the slave unit to the master controller and the master controller to the slave unit. Fact 4. There is a visual indication at the slave unit that it is in the install or verification process; however, this visual indication is not provided upon selection of the slave unit at the master controller, but rather when the install button is depressed at the slave unit. Fact 3. Further, Huang does not teach verification based upon this visual indication. Sinha also teaches a lighting control system, where there is a remote unit that controls Low Voltage Modules (LVM) which function as lighting control units. Fact 5. Sinha teaches that there are LEDs on the remote unit indicating operation of the LVM and programming status of the LVM. Fact 6. The Examiner's finding that Sinha teaches visual confirmation via LEDs is correct; however, these LEDs are on the remote

panel, and as such do not meet the claim limitation that the visual confirmation is performed by the plural lighting devices (i.e., lights controlled by the LVM). Thus, Appellant's arguments have persuaded us of error in the Examiner's rejection of independent claims 1, 5, 10, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Thus, we reverse the Examiner's rejection of claims 1, 2, 4 through 7, 10, and 19 through 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Huang in view of Sinha.

The Examiner has not found, nor do we find, that the teachings of Mitchell, Grouev, and Appellant's admitted prior art, Colton, Kronz, or Meier, make up for the deficiency in the rejection of independent claims 1, 5, 10, and 21. Thus, we reverse the Examiner's rejections of dependent claims 11 through 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Independent claim 8 and the claims dependent thereupon.

Appellant's arguments have persuaded us of error in the Examiner's rejection of independent claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Similar to claim 1 discussed above, independent claim 8 includes limitations directed to a visual confirmation performed by the lighting devices in response to a selection on the remote control. Further, claim 8, recites a software for "initializing or binding" the slave unit in response to the visual confirmation. As discussed above with respect to claim 1, we do not find that the combination of Huang and Sinha to teach an action in response to a visual confirmation performed by the lighting devices in response to a selection on the remote control. The Examiner has not found, nor do we find, that Mitchell includes such a teaching. Accordingly, Appellant's arguments have persuaded us of error in the Examiner's rejection of claims 8, 9, and 17

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under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Huang in view of Sinha and Mitchell.

The Examiner has not found, nor do we find, that the teachings of Meier, make up for the deficiency in the rejection of independent claim 8. Thus, we reverse the Examiner's rejections of dependent claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

ORDER

For the foregoing reasons, we will not sustain the Examiner's rejections of claims 1, 2, and 4 through 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103. The decision of the Examiner is reversed.

REVERSED

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